Procrastination

Procrastination is one thing I am absolutely sure many people can testify to sharing in common. Most people, if not all procrastinate on some extent or another. What is procrastination, exactly? Well, the dictionary definition is along the lines of: *to defer action; delay; to put off till another day or time*. As Thomas Jefferson once said, “Never put off till tomorrow what you can do today.”

Now we know *what* procrastination is, but what are we doing about it? Well, for most people, nothing at all. That’s the thing. Procrastination can be commonly found in a vicious cycle. Let’s take this sample conversation as an example:

“Hey, what’s up?”

“Nothing much. I’m playing video games.”

“Do you have homework to do?”

“Yeah.”

“Are you going to start your homework?”

“I’ll think about that later.”

And so on.

But *why* do we procrastinate? If procrastination is quite a wasteful thing to do, then why do we do it? Do we assume simply that people who procrastinate are unsophisticated and ignorant? There are many people who may be smart, intelligent, sensible people, aside from the fact that they procrastinate. Before we delve deeper into the why, we must understand that there are generally two types of people who partake in procrastination - relaxed and tense-afraid.

Tense afraid people are typically overwhelmed by pressure and holding unrealistic expectations. Feeling an inability to do work, they may put it off later after they relax and unwind, hoping that it will help them. More often than not, this only increases stress as the deadline looms closer. These procrastinators may also be perfectionists, but not all of them are.

The relaxed group of people are in a form of denial, especially with their responsibility. Viewing assigned tasks negatively, they tend to seek more enjoyable activities instead. For many people, this may mean putting off homework to enjoy social life, or video games. These people may be very well aware that they are procrastinating and not care much about it.

There is also a condition called the student syndrome. These students usually start off with good intentions and then spend too much time delving in research. By the time they start to compile the assignment, they figure they don’t have enough time. Now they ask their teacher for an extension, citing the fact that their project would be so much better given enough time. However, the student will find themselves once again preoccupied with tasks, putting off the work till the last minute. This essentially eliminates and buffers put into task duration estimates.

After obtaining all this knowledge, really, what should we do about procrastinating? If it’s such a big problem, why haven’t we solved it yet for everybody? There are several strategies you can use to deal with procrastinating:

One of them is very simple – you write it down. Simply writing down your goals increases the likelihood of its completion, and even more so if you tell people about them or show it to them.

Also, in order to develop better time management skills, you can try and work out the amount of time necessary for certain tasks, and try to stay within those boundaries, eliminating distractions.

And if you find the task unpleasant? Reward yourself for finishing it, or you can try and keep the thought of what might happen if you didn’t finish it in your mind.

Each of these, if not all of them, will help you a great deal in stopping the procrastination cycle. And remember, perhaps sometimes procrastination is best put off until tomorrow.